

FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE

PANAMA BUREAU

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4 February 1981

MPA# 1004

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, FBIS

THROUGH : Chief, Operations Group

SUBJECT : Monthly Report -- Panama Bureau -- January 1981

I. GENERAL

Department of Defense and Panama Canal Commission administration officials met several times during the month with leaders of local unions representing DOD and PCC employees to discuss the Panama Area Wage Base. The PAWB salary schedule applies to all local hire employees of U.S. agencies in the area who were employed after 1 October 1979, the date the Canal treaties went into effect. Its salary wage scale is below that paid employees hired prior to the treaty implementation date and the unions, backed by Panamanian Government officials, contend it should be revised because it violates the concept of equal pay for equal work. At month's end there was no resolution, with more meetings planned. The eventual outcome will have a direct bearing on the bureau's future local employees who, as things stand now, will come under the PAWB salary schedule.

II. OPERATIONS

A. Monitorial/Editorial:

1. El Salvador continued to be the main area of attention in January. Described first by the Salvadoran leftist opposition front as a "final" offensive and later modified to "general" offensive, the upsurge of violence in that country led to a cessation of individual station newscasts and government requirement for stations to join in a controlled national network. Additionally, the two major written opposition media, the newspaper EL INDEPENDIENTE and the "press agency" API NEWS, were raided and their equipment destroyed. Therefore, although censorship was never officially imposed, at month's end the only opposition broadcasters monitored by the bureau were two clandestine stations.

2. Attention was also focussed on Nicaragua. Processing increased significantly as a result of an apparent new hard line enunciated by the

-2-

leadership against the United States shortly after the takeover of the new U.S. administration on 20 January. In response to an AG initiative, the bureau is exploring ways to provide data-base Nicaraguan material for use in future analysis reports.

3. In other developments in January, the bureau filed heavily on local Panamanian reaction to the installation of the new U.S. administration, and shifted some of its resources to whatever reliable coverage could be maintained of Quito sources as a result of the Ecuador-Peru border flare-up.

B. Communications:

Testing got under way of the newly installed 4-wire line on the bureau's dedicated circuit with Managua and San Salvador. When the test results are satisfactory, the bureau will activate its telephone switching system which will allow, among other things, the remote tuning of radio receivers already in place in Managua and San Salvador.

C. Coverage:

Two antigovernment clandestine stations broadcasting to El Salvador were heard by the bureau beginning in January. "Radio Liberation" was first monitored on 6 January and "Radio Venceremos" on 29 January. Both claim to be the voice of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front of El Salvador and carry proleft material. Both stations have been placed on regular coverage.

III. ADMINISTRATION

A. Personnel:

1. Spanish monitor [ ] was promoted to grade NM<sup>9</sup> STAT on 11 January.

2. A ceremony was held on 22 January at which the bureau chief presented to the communications section personnel an FBIS Citation for Meritorious Performance awarded by the Director, FBIS, for the unit's sustained superior performance over an extended period of time since the beginning of developments in Nicaragua in 1978.

IV. VISITS

1. Timothy Desmond, Amemb Panama, on 9 January.

2. Former monitors [ ] on 15 January. STAT

3. [ ] former director of FBIS, and his wife Martha, on 19 January. STAT

-3-

4. [ ] operations research analyst for the U.S. ArmySTAT  
Tropic Test Center, on 23 January.

5. [ ] Headquarters analyst, on 26 January. STAT

[ ] STAT  
Chief, Panama Bureau, FBIS

Attachments:

Monthly Production Report  
Operations Attachment  
Engineering Attachment  
Publications Coverage Report  
Coverage Schedule

cc: Chief, Paraguay Bureau  
Chief, Key West Bureau